

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

January 13, 1997

I welcome the resumption of the multiparty talks on the future of Northern Ireland in Belfast today. As the new year begins, I urge the British and Irish Governments and the leaders of Northern Ireland's political parties to press forward with their efforts to achieve a lasting settlement that will ensure peace, justice, prosperity, and opportunity for the people they represent. I am proud of the contribution that Senator George Mitchell and his two cochairmen are making to these important negotiations.

I am deeply outraged by the end of the IRA cease-fire, which threatens to plunge Northern Ireland into a senseless spiral of violence. As we start a new year, I call again on the IRA to restore its cease-fire immediately. I have always believed that the Belfast talks will have a better chance of success if all the elected parties, including Sinn Féin, are at the table, but that can only happen if the IRA declares and implements a cease-fire in both words and deeds. I remain convinced that if such an action is taken, substantive and inclusive talks would soon follow.

As I saw during my visit to Northern Ireland just over a year ago, the overwhelming majority of the people yearn for a just and lasting settlement and an end to the conflict that has divided them for so long. I am committed to supporting the courageous people of both traditions who are working toward that goal. And I urge the loyalists to maintain their cease-fire and refrain from descending into a cycle of escalating violence.

Sadly, sectarian clashes during the summer revealed again the depth of suspicion and animosity between the two communities of Northern Ireland. When we look back in another year's time, I pray that we will call to mind images of hope and promise, reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland. My administration remains committed to supporting the British and Irish Governments, the political leaders, and the people of Northern Ireland as they work to reach a just and lasting settlement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Intelligence Community Budget

January 13, 1997

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As required by section 501 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, I transmit herewith the Report on Executive Branch Oversight of the Intelligence Community Budget. This report describes actions taken to ensure adequate oversight by the executive branch of the budget of the National Reconnaissance Office and the budgets of other elements of the intelligence community within the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Larry Combest, chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on National Security; Arlen Specter, chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; and Strom Thurmond, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Secretary of Defense William Perry in Fort Myer, Virginia

January 14, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. General Shalikashvili, Mrs. Shalikashvili, distinguished leaders of United States Armed Forces, Members of Congress, service members in our Armed Forces assembled here today, friends of Secretary and Mrs. Perry, and to Bill and Lee and your children and your grandchildren, your other family members who are here today. Let me say that for Hillary and me this is a bittersweet day, a great privilege for us to be here to honor Bill and Lee, a great regret that our Nation will be losing—as all nations must and we, too, must from time to time—one of the ablest people who ever served the United States in any position. We come to honor Bill